

# The Goals Of Basic Education For Alberta

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prepared and submitted by: The Curriculum Policies Board, September 2, 1977.

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September 2, 1977

The Honorable Mr. Julian Koziak  
Minister of Education  
Government of Alberta  
Legislative Building  
Edmonton, Alta  
T5K 2B6

Sir:

It is my pleasure on behalf of the Curriculum Policies Board to submit to you a recommendation on the Goals of Basic Education for Alberta.

We trust that this submission will constitute a significant contribution to the review of the goals of basic education initiated by the Government's Speech from the Throne of February 24, 1977.

The Board extends its willingness to assist in the clarification and elaboration of the submission and with any further exploration you may deem appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,



E.A. Torgunrud, Chairman  
Curriculum Policies Board

EAT:th  
Submission

# INTRODUCTION

Goals are statements which indicate what is to be achieved or worked toward. In relation to basic education, goals serve several functions:

- (1) they identify the distinctive role of the school and its contribution to the total education of youth;
- (2) they provide purpose and direction to curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation;
- (3) they enable parents, teachers, and the community at large to develop a common understanding of what the schools are trying to achieve.

## Purpose of Goals

## Need to Re-examine Goals

Society must periodically re-examine the goals of its schools. Changes in emphasis and minor adjustment of the basic goals may be required from time to time to keep pace with social change.

This statement of goals is to direct education for grades 1 through 12 in Alberta schools. It is the basis from which specific objectives for various subjects and grades shall be developed.

## The Role of Schooling in Education

While the school makes a very important contribution to education, it is only one of the agencies involved in the education of youth. The home, the church, the media, and community organizations are very significant influences on children. It is useful, therefore, to delimit the role of schooling in education. Education refers to all the learning experiences the individual has in interacting with the physical and social environment; it is a continuing and lifelong process. Schooling, which has a more limited purpose, refers to the learning activities planned and conducted by a formally structured agency which influences individuals during a specified period. There is, of course, a very close relationship between schooling and education — the learning which occurs in school influences and is influenced by what is learned outside the school.

# GOALS OF SCHOOLING

Schooling, as part of education, accepts primary and distinctive responsibility for specific goals basic to the broader goals of education. Programs and activities shall be planned, taught, and evaluated on the basis of these specific goals in order that students:

- (1) Develop competencies in reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing.
- (2) Develop basic knowledge and skills in mathematics, the sciences, the social studies (including history and geography), and the practical and fine arts, with appropriate local, national, and international emphases in each.
- (3) Develop the learning skills of finding, organizing, analyzing, and applying information in a critical and objective manner.
- (4) Develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits which contribute to physical and mental health and safety.
- (5) Develop an understanding of the meaning, responsibilities, and benefits of active citizenship at the local, national, and international levels.
- (6) Develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits required to respond to the opportunities and expectations of the world of work.

Because the above goals are highly interrelated, each complementing and reinforcing the others, priority ranking among them is not suggested. It is recognized that in sequencing learning activities for students some goals are emphasized earlier than others; however, in relation to the total years of schooling, they are of equal importance.

In working toward the attainment of its goals, the school will strive for excellence. However, the degree of individual achievement also depends on student ability and motivation as well as support from the home. Completion of diploma requirements is expected to provide the graduate with basic preparation for lifelong learning. Dependent on program choices, the diploma also enables job entry or further formal study.

# GOALS OF EDUCATION

Achievement of the broader goals of education must be viewed as a shared responsibility of the community. Maximum learning occurs when the efforts and expectations of various agencies affecting children complement each other. Recognizing the learning that has or has not occurred through various community influences, among which the home is most important, the school will strive to:

## Goals of Education

- (1) Develop intellectual curiosity and a desire for lifelong learning.
- (2) Develop the ability to get along with people of varying backgrounds, beliefs and lifestyles.
- (3) Develop a sense of community responsibility which embraces respect for law and authority, public and private property, and the rights of others.
- (4) Develop self-discipline, self-understanding, and a positive self-concept through realistic appraisal of one's capabilities and limitations.
- (5) Develop the ability to understand and respond to change as it occurs in personal life and in society.
- (6) Develop skills for effective utilization of financial resources, community agencies, and leisure time.
- (7) Develop an understanding of the role of the family in society and promote satisfying family relationships.
- (8) Develop an interest in participating in the cultural pursuits of creative expression and appreciation.
- (9) Develop a commitment to the careful use of natural resources and to the preservation and improvement of the physical environment.
- (10) Develop a sense of purpose in life which is consistent with one's ethical and/or spiritual beliefs.

The ultimate aim of education is to develop the abilities of the individual in order that he might fulfill his personal aspirations while making a positive contribution to society.





## SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Education must serve the needs of the individual and the needs of society. Setting goals for education, therefore, involves an assessment of what these needs are. The task is made difficult by the fact that education must prepare the individual for living in the future as well as in the present.

No one can predict with certainty what society will be like in the future. Though trends in the present may provide clues, there is disagreement about whether these trends should be encouraged or arrested. For example, while some believe that our emphasis on production and consumption of goods will lead to disaster because of resource depletion and damage to the environment, others argue that new resources will be found and that increasing production is necessary to create jobs and improve the standard of living. With respect to the trend toward increased government activity, some claim that governments are doing too much for people and are destroying initiative and self-sufficiency; others maintain that governments must expand services to equalize opportunities and to improve the quality of life. Such conflicting views make it difficult to reach agreement on which societal trends should be considered in establishing the goals of education.

People rightfully expect the schools to contribute to the fulfillment of certain basic needs of society. The most commonly identified societal needs include:

- (1) Preparing individuals to assume various roles and to perform essential tasks.
- (2) Developing a sense of unity through common ideas and procedures.
- (3) Developing communication among members and groups.
- (4) Protecting and maintaining a healthful environment.
- (5) Establishing the range of acceptable behavior.
- (6) Developing procedures to assure its continuity, maintenance and improvement.

Though everyone recognizes that individuals differ greatly, psychologists who have devoted extensive study to human motivations and drives suggest that individuals have some common basic needs. Among those frequently identified are:

- (1) Food, shelter, rest and recreation.
- (2) Safety, security and trust.
- (3) Sense of belonging and being cared about.
- (4) Sense of achievement and recognition.
- (5) Sense of adequacy, self-sufficiency, and independence.
- (6) Opportunity to create, learn on one's own, and express ideas and feelings.

It is obvious that some of these needs are requirements for survival while others are related to emotional well-being. It has been suggested by researchers on human behavior that the thwarting of basic needs is a fundamental cause of maladjustment and anti-social behavior. If this is so, it is clear that the school, through what it teaches and how it teaches, must be very aware of the basic needs of children.

Democratic societies pride themselves in their ability to balance the needs of society with those of the individual. The challenge of maintaining a unified social group while allowing for individual aspirations is one of which faces every organization, including the school.

The  
Needs  
of  
Society

The  
Needs  
of the  
Individual

## THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN SOCIETY

People have come to view the school as one of the most important means of transmitting society's knowledge, skills, and values to the young. It is not surprising that nearly everyone views achievement in school as a major step toward achievement in life. High and varied expectations — some of which are perhaps inappropriate or unrealistic — have been placed on the school. It may be that some of these expectations have developed because schools have assumed certain tasks too readily in the past and have left the impression that they are prepared to take over the total education of children.

There is a growing recognition that what the school is able to accomplish with youth is highly dependent on the degree of support it receives from other educating influences in society. The role of the family, the most basic unit of society, is critical in this regard. Parents open doors to learning, not only by the home environment they create for children, but also by determining the role to be played by other educating influences such as the church, the media, and community groups. With the support of the home in matters of motivation and discipline of children, the school has an excellent chance of attaining its goals and making a significant contribution to the broader goals of education.

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